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When life imitates (mediocre) art

31 people have been arrested in an estimated $50 million diamond heist at Brussels Airport

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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Grand theft bicycle

The new commute. Bike thefts steadily increasing as more riders take to city streets

MARK SPOWART
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Shelby Henri estimates she was in the grocery store for no more than seven minutes when her bike was stolen last summer.

She hasn't replaced it yet. But, when she does, the Londoner has a plan of action.

"I will be (getting insurance on) my next bike, and will try not to get too emotionally attached," Henri said.

She's far from alone in her woes.

Henri's bike was one of 788 reported stolen to the London police in 2012 — a more than 20 per cent increase since 2010.

It's hard to nail down why the numbers are jumping, police say.

Part of it could quite simply be that more and more people are riding, said Robert Sturdy, floor manager at To Wheels bike shop.

In the last five years, Sturdy said, the number of people buying bicycles for their work commute has steadily increased. And, in some cases, he said, people aren't as vigilant as they should be about locking them up.

"Cable locks are too easy to cut. Thieves know what tools to bring and it takes less than two minutes for them to cut through a cable," Sturdy said.

U-locks are the way to go, he said, making sure the lock is around the back wheel, the bike frame and whatever you're latching onto.

Police Const. Ken Steeves recommends people record their bike's serial number and include it when reporting a theft.

Officers can enter the serial number in a database that will notify them if the bike is recovered.

Thieves going green

- While bicycle thefts are increasing in London, auto theft is declining.
- Reports of stolen cars hit 3,110 in 2001, falling to 859 last year.

HEAVY HITTERS

London's Bo Horvat finishes a check on Barrie Colts defenceman Ryan O'Connor during Game 4 of the OHL final, Wednesday, at the Barrie Molson Centre. For Knights coverage, see page 7. JOHN MATISZ/METRO

Financial accountability

Andrea Horwath METRO

More budget asks from Ontario NDP

Ontario's New Democrats added to the list of changes they want in the minority Liberal government's budget Wednesday, and said they would be making even more demands once they wrap up public consultations next week.

The budget addressed many NDP concerns, admitted party Leader Andrea Horwath, but did not include "a key ask" to make government more transparent by creating a financial accountability office, modelled on the parliamentary budget office in Ottawa.

"We need to ensure that there are no more Ornge, eHealth or gas plant scandals in this province. Something needs to bring an end to the Liberals' free ride," said Horwath.

The Progressive Conservatives rejected the call, saying the province does not need more bureaucrats.

"If you think a government is corrupt and can't be trusted with taxpayer dollars, the answer is not a new bureaucracy, it's a new government," said PC Leader Tim Hudak.

Horwath said she wouldn't make the accountability officer a deal breaker for supporting the minority government's budget because she's still consulting the public and expects to make more demands.

"Am I going to draw a line in the sand at this point? No," she said.

Premier Kathleen Wynne called Horwath's proposal "an interesting idea," but said she had been unable to get a meeting with the NDP leader.

"The budget is not a starting point for negotiations. I think it should go forward the way it stands. We're not starting from scratch.''

Wynne repeated that she's not afraid of what she calls "an unnecessary election" if the opposition parties make the choice to defeat the budget.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Paper tickets will be a thing of the past in about 16 months once the London Transit Commission installs a smart-card system on buses. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Smart-card program gets pushed back

LTC. Setting up system taking longer than expected, officials say

MARK SPOWART
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Tired of fumbling for change at the bus stop or lining up to renew your monthly pass?

Relief is coming, but you're going to have wait just a little bit longer.

The London Transit Commission has set a new timeline for implementing its smart-card system. Originally expected to start trickling onto buses this fall, officials now say testing won't start until spring 2014.

The program will likely be ready to go full bore next fall.

Things are "going well," London Transit general manager Larry Ducharme said.

But, he added: "We are at the stage where you are really detailing and defining the program.

"There is a lot of (programming) to write, and you just don't want to get it wrong."

Right now, riders can cover their fare in one of five ways: Pay cash for each trip, use a ticket, show a monthly pass, flash their student card or give the driver a transfer.

The smart-card system has to handle all of these efficiently and quickly, Ducharme said, explaining why things have gotten so complex.

The LTC approved spending up to $3 million last summer to have a U.S.-based company install the new technology.

Once it's in place, people will be able to reload the smart cards online or at LTC ticket kiosks.

"There are a significant number of benefits to using a smart card system, most notable will be the time it takes to board the bus," Ducharme said. "Rather than dropping change or inserting tickets and asking for a transfer, it will be a simple one tap of the card."

The cost:

- An initial report on the LTC smart-card program pegged the expected annual operating cost at around $350,000.
- That figure is expected to be offset by savings in areas including ticket/transfer printing and fare-box maintenance, officials have said.

Some city bus routes have become so busy drivers are turning away would-be passengers, officials say. The problem is highlighted in the London Transit Commission's latest annual report. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Annual report

Bus ridership booming

The London Transit Commission's 2012 annual report is a story of good news, with bad consequences.

The good news? More people are riding. The consequence? People are being left at the curb.

"Across the entire system, we have a capacity of 38 seats per hour," London Transit general manager Larry Ducharme said. "We are getting 45 riders in that same hour, and at peak times, that number jumps up to 65 to 70 people."

The annual report was released this week.

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Survey. Multi-family projects easing dip in traditional home starts

London-area developers are breaking ground on more multi-family complexes as the number of single-family homes being built dips.

Data released Wednesday by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation shows 86 multi-family projects started between January and April, compared to 38 in 2012. The number of single-family housing starts, meanwhile, dipped to 253 from last year's 348.

Overall, London-area housing starts are beginning to level off, officials said. April numbers showed very little change from March.

"Single-detached starts showed signs of life and (townhouse) starts in the city of London remained strong, leading to a pause in the downward trend in start activity seen through the beginning of 2013," said Alexander Bonnyman, the housing corporation's senior market analyst for London.

The numbers buck a provincial trend in which developers are backing away from new projects all together, especially multi-family complexes.

Ontario's single-family housing starts fell to 5,218 from 6,244 during the first quarter.

The decline in multi-family construction was sharper — hitting 9,540 during the first four months of 2013 compared to 17,739 for the same period last year. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Why the numbers matter

- Housing starts are considered a key indicator of economic strength.
- When people don't feel comfortable with the economy, they generally don't break ground on projects.

Road safety. Downtown blitz leads to over 100 tickets: London police

London police handed out 102 citations Tuesday during a blitz focused on reducing crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists.

The blitz focused on key intersections in the downtown core, said Sgt. Ryan Scrivens, with the service's traffic management unit. Offences included drivers making illegal turns, cyclists riding on sidewalks and pedestrians not obeying signals.

Scrivens said the effort was aimed at creating awareness. So far this year, the police service has counted 70 vehicle-pedestrian crashes compared to 59 for the same period last year.

There have been 14 run-ins between cyclists and vehicles since Jan. 1. METRO

The numbers

40

Number of vehicle-bicycle crashes from January to early May in 2012.
Source: London Police.

Non-profit

Habitat's grand Reopening

Habitat for Humanity is officially throwing open the doors of its third ReStore location.

A grand opening celebration is planned from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at 1058 Parkinson Road in Woodstock.

ReStores sell donated building supplies with proceeds supporting affordable homes for local families. METRO

Benefits

Art for allergies

Perfect Image tattoo and piercing shop (691 Richmond St.) is getting ready to launch a silent art auction to benefit Anaphylaxis Canada.

Items will include pieces from Canadian and American artists. Bids can be placed in the store or on the business' Facebook page after 8 p.m. Saturday. The auction continues through May 31. METRO

Gov. Gen. David Johnston listens to Emanuela Bringi, 20, of London, Wednesday, during a United Way Youth Forum at Western University.
MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Johnston lends an ear to students

UWO roundtable. Governor General meets with local youth leaders during London stopover

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If they were overwhelmed, they certainly didn't show it.

More than 75 local student leaders got the chance to share their ideas on youth engagement with Canada's Governor General Wednesday at Western University.

The roundtable comes as David Johnston works to build a framework for a "smart and caring nation."

Johnston, who's spending two days in London, spoke little during the event. More than anything, he listened — giving only a few brief remarks before moving from table to table filled with young faces.

As far as organizers are concerned, what Johnston heard could very well prompt some big results.

"I think (youths) have a lot to offer, and thoughts that we need to hear," said Andrew Lockie, CEO of the United Way of London and Middlesex.

The United Way hosted the event, pulling together a group of youths who represented as many perspectives as possible.

If the significance was, by some chance, lost on the students, it wasn't lost on Lockie.

"More than anything else, this is a chance for them to influence and share their ideas with the governor general of Canada," he said. "Our objective is that youth feel highly engaged and the governor general receive useful information so he can provide the kind of caring nation he hopes to create."

Valuable voices

"I think (youths) have a lot to offer, and thoughts that we need to hear."
Andrew Lockie, CEO of the United Way of London and Middlesex

Engagement

Student warms to Johnston's approach

Dallas Barnes was one of the 75 student leaders who sat down for some face time Wednesday with Canada's Governor General.

While she had to do a "little" research about David Johnston before the meeting, Barnes was no less impressed.

"First of all it was an honour to meet him, and what really stuck out for me was how relatable (to youths) he was and how much he acts like a fatherly figure," said Barnes, a 17-year-old Medway High School student.

"He really wants to get to know the people of his country, and I thought that was pretty profound."

Dallas Barnes.
MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

When Johnston chatted with Barnes' group during the youth-engagement forum, members talked about the importance of creating programs that are affordable to youths.

"I hope he (Johnston) knows how much youth want to be involved, how much they care about being involved in our country and our community," Barnes said.

MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

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Keeping the bottles in the air with flair

Dustin Kiefer, 25, of London, practices his flair bartending skills Wednesday in Victoria Park. Environment Canada says sunny warmth will give way to cooler temperatures and rain over the weekend, which is just fine by Kiefer. "Practicing with wet hands is OK, cause, when you are bartending, your hands are always wet," he said. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

$50,000 on the line at science fair

$3M in prizes. Local high schoolers among those competing at international fair for a university scholarship, bragging rights

ANGELA MULLINS
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Meet three of Canada's newest ambassadors: Dan Alferov, Jessie MacAlpine and Xinyang Young Zhou.

The teenage whiz kids will be whisked out of Ontario this week and plopped in the middle of the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair — billed as the world's largest science fair for high school students.

Simply put: "I'm super excited," said Zhou, a Grade 12 student at London Central Secondary School.

The fair, running Sunday to May 17 in Phoenix, Ariz., will see 1,500 of the world's best and brightest compete for $3 million in prizes. The granddaddy of them all is a $50,000 university scholarship.

In some ways, making the trip is as much about representing Canada — and more specifically, London — than bringing home the bacon, the students said.

Each was selected for the team by Youth Science Canada after making a healthy showing at last year's Canada-wide science fair. They'll be joined on the national team by 16 other teens who've proven worthy competitors at past events.

While he's hoping to pick up some hardware in Arizona, Alferov is also trying to keep the bigger picture in mind.

"I just really want to focus on the journey, if you will," the Grade 10 student at A.B. Lucas Secondary School said.

"Going to Phoenix is such a monumental opportunity. I think that's just a blessing in and of itself and a great opportunity to showcase my talent and my project."

Representing

19

In all, 19 Canadian teens — three from the London area — will go to the fair in Phoenix, Ariz., to compete. Dan Alferov calls the trip "a monumental opportunity" and a "blessing."

The projects

Used visual awareness to establish a link between the brain and mind.

Dan Alferov, London

Tested the effect of ginseng on treating Alzheimer's disease.

Xinyang Young Zhou, London

Identified mustard oil as a possible treatment for malaria.

Jessie MacAlpine, Woodstock

London popular choice for immigrants: Survey

About the results

- The 2011 National Household Survey replaced the long-form census at the bequest of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.
- The first results were released Wednesday, and Statistics Canada is warning people about the risks of comparing them with the 2006 census data.
- The household survey went to more households than the census but was voluntary instead of mandatory.

London plays home to a lower percentage of immigrants than Ontario as a whole but is holding its own when compared to the nation, according to the 2011 National Household Survey.

Immigrants account for 21.2 per cent of Forest City residents, the survey says. The numbers stand at 28.5 per cent in Ontario and 20.6 per cent countrywide.

Of the immigrants living in London, 11,410 — or 14.9 per cent — came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. The most common countries of birth were the United Kingdom and Poland.

The majority of Londoners who came from abroad speak either English or French. The third most-common language is Spanish, spoken by 7.7 per cent of immigrants.

Of the 252,740 city residents who claim a religious affiliation, most — 26.8 per cent — say they're Roman Catholic.

About 16 per cent of Londoners are visible minorities, compared to about 26 per cent of Ontario's population. The largest visible minority groups in the city are Latin American and Arab compared to South Asian and Chinese for Ontario.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Mother's Day sale

Instead of flowers, how about some veggies for mom?

What's a group called Food Not Lawns sell when it wants to raise a little extra money?

Plants, of course.

The non-profit that encourages people to grow vegetables instead of shrubbery in their yards will have a Mother's Day plant sale Friday and Saturday at the London Food Co-op (621 Princess Ave.).

Hours are 4 to 7 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. METRO

TVDSB. Student trustees appointed to the board

Two Thames Valley students have been tapped to make their peers' voices heard to school district trustees.

Diana Idibe, a student at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School, and Central Elgin Collegiate Institute's Claire Tully will start their posts at the Thames Valley District School Board as student trustees on Aug. 1.

The teens won't be able to vote on issues before the board, but will attend meetings and participate like other trustees. They'll meet with high school students throughout the 2013-14 school year to hear input on issues facing individual schools and the district as a whole.

METRO

Details

- Enna Kim, a student at London Central Secondary School, and Page Forron, who attends Medway High School, have been serving as student trustees during the 2012-13 school year.
- Their term expires July 31.

A rough third period for the Knights leads to Game 4 loss

Ahead. The Barrie Colts have a 3-1 series lead, with Game 5 going Friday in London

JOHN MATISZ
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OK, London Knights fans, it's officially kosher to push the panic button.

Thanks to a 6-4 road loss Wednesday, the defending Ontario Hockey League champs are in a serious bind.

They have been pushed to the brink of elimination in the OHL final series, trailing the Barrie Colts 3-1.

A powerful third period from Barrie, which featured four goals in the first eight minutes, vaulted the Colts to a come-from-behind victory in front of a boisterous crowd at the Molson Centre.

Winnipeg Jets blue-chipper Mark Scheifele, who finished with five points in Game 4, recorded a natural hat-trick over that action-packed span.

Scheifele, 20, now has 12 points in the series and is the runaway favourite to capture playoff MVP honours if his squad can claim the J. Ross Robertson Cup. Simply put, the Kitchener native is white-hot.

Meanwhile, Knights netminder Anthony Stolarz did not provide a bounce-back effort, letting in five goals on 23 shots only two nights after allowing five on 28 in Game 3.

It was a rough night for Stolarz from the opening puck drop onwards, as Anthony Camara scored on the first shot of the game just 37 seconds in.

Olli Maatta, one of London's top players Wednesday due to excellent defensive play all night, picked up an assist in the losing effort.

The import rearguard now has points in five consecutive games.

In the opening 20 minutes, the Knights took it to the Colts, firing 15 shots at Barrie's net. They led 2-1 as first intermission began and 3-1 heading into the third.

It all unraveled in the final frame.

Pesky forward Matt Rupert returned to the Knights lineup Wednesday, suiting up for the first time in 10 games, but did not do anything noteworthy.

Mitchell Theoret of the Colts, however, was sidelined with an upper body injury.

London Knights defenceman Tommy Hughes, with Barrie Colts forward Brendan Lemieux attacking, tries to clear the puck from behind the net during Game 4 action, Wednesday, at the Barrie Molson Centre.
JOHN MATISZ/METRO

Several Knights reaching the end of OHL careers

The end of the road is near for a group of elder London Knights, regardless of the OHL championship's final outcome.

These last games versus the Barrie Colts — and, if London manages to win the best-of-seven series, the Memorial Cup tournament — are the only remaining stops on their multi-year major junior hockey careers.

Blueliner Tommy Hughes and forward/defenceman Tyler Ferry are ineligible to return next season due to age, while the fate of another group is to be determined.

London Knights captain Scott Harrington, likely to play in the American Hockey League next season, is pictured during a game earlier this year.
JOHN MATISZ/METRO

As it stands now, it's looking like between five and seven Knights won't be around in September.

"I still remember back to draft day when I got drafted in the 15th round," Ferry, 20, said. "I was a little disappointed, but my (ex-Knight) brother … said, 'If you want to go anywhere, London's the place.'"

And here he is, nearly 200 games later, with an OHL championship ring from 2012 and, perhaps, a second coming from this year.

He also has several offers to play at the university level. Ferry is undecided on a school, but says he'll likely land on Canada's East Cost come fall.

It's a foregone conclusion that another veteran, captain Scott Harrington, is bound for the American Hockey League to suit up for the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins.

"It's been everything I thought it would, and more," the 19-year-old rearguard said about being a Knight. "I've enjoyed every day I've played in London, learned so much from the Hunters."

"There's nowhere else I wish I would have played."

To Ferry, it doesn't feel like two-plus seasons of OHL hockey has passed. It's flown by, he says, and has brought its fair share of ups and downs.

"Getting cut (from the team), catching my break, and now I've done well and stuck around," Ferry said with a proud smile.

JOHN MATISZ/METRO

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Marathon bombing

Suspect's body still without a grave

The dispute over where to bury suspected Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev escalated Wednesday as a Massachusetts police chief urged someone to step forward with a cemetery plot, saying: "We are not barbarians. We bury the dead."

Worcester Police Chief Gary Gemme's plea came a day after he said that a deal struck Monday to bury the 26-year-old's remains at a state prison site dissolved, with state officials no longer offering co-operation.

Police said it's costing the department tens of thousands of dollars to provide security at the funeral home that is holding Tsarnaev's body.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

31 years in prison

Wrongfully jailed man denied suit

A man who spent 31 years behind bars before his murder conviction was quashed has lost his bid to sue those involved in his prosecution, an Ontario court has ruled.

In dismissing the $14-million lawsuit, Superior Court Justice Eva Frank found the Ontario Court of Appeal had already weighed in against many of the allegations Romeo Phillion made in his claim.

Phillion, 74, alleged negligence and wrongdoing by prosecutors and police. He claimed the defendants had failed to tell the defence about an alibi that might have exonerated him.

Phillion was convicted in 1972 of having murdered Ottawa firefighter Leopold Roy. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Utah

Teen charged with homicide by assault in referee's death

A Utah teen accused of punching a soccer referee who later died was charged Wednesday with homicide by assault, a count issued when an attack unintentionally causes death.

Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill also said he will seek to try the teen as an adult in the death of 46-year-old Ricardo Portillo.

The charge is less serious than manslaughter. It carries a sentence of up to five years in prison for adults.

Portillo called a penalty on the teen for pushing. Charging documents show witnesses said the teenager threw one punch, hitting Portillo in the rear jaw area.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Man charged in decade-long kidnapping, rape of women

Cleveland, Ohio.
No evidence his brothers were involved, police say

A Cleveland man arrested after three women missing for a decade were found alive at his run-down home was charged Wednesday with kidnapping and raping them. Prosecutors brought no charges against his brothers, saying there was no evidence they had any part in the crime.

Ariel Castro, 52, was charged with four counts of kidnapping — covering all three captives and the daughter born to one of them while she was held — and three counts of rape against the three women.

The former school bus driver owns the home where the women were rescued on Monday, after one of them broke through a screen door.

Police said that they were apparently bound with ropes and chains, and a city councilman briefed on the case, Brian Cummins, said they suffered miscarriages.

Deputy Police Chief Ed Tomba said the women could remember being outside only twice during their captivity.

And their first opportunity to escape didn't come until Monday, he said. The women were not kept in the same room but knew they were not alone, he said.

Earlier in the day, former captives Amanda Berry and Gina DeJesus were welcomed home by jubilant crowds of loved ones and neighbours with balloons and banners.

The third captive, Michelle Knight, 32, was reported in good condition at Metro Health Medical Center.

Neighbours said that Ariel Castro took part in the search for one of the missing women, helped pass out fliers, performed music at a fundraiser for her and attended a candlelight vigil, where he comforted her mother. As recently as 2005, Castro was accused of repeated acts of violence against his children's mother.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Neighbours and friends of Amanda Berry clap as she arrives at her sister's home on Wednesday in Cleveland. Inset: Ariel Castro, the former bus driver charged with the crime. TONY DEJAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'Similarities'

A fourth girl?

Ashley Summers
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A fourth woman could be connected to the shocking case, the FBI confirms.

Ashley Summers disappeared at age 14 from the same area where the others were abducted.

Knight was abducted in 2002, Berry in 2003 and DeJesus in 2004.

Summers was last seen on July 9, 2007.

FBI spokesperson Vicki Anderson said the disappearance has "similarities" that the FBI is investigating.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Package had makings of a bomb: Ottawa police

Police are looking for witnesses in relation to the suspicious package. METRO

A suspicious package found in the lobby of the Ottawa offices of the Department of National Defence Tuesday evening had the hallmarks of an improvised explosive device, police say.

"An X-ray was done of the package," said Insp. Mike Maloney. He said the package had a power source and a timing device but no explosive material. He also said there was "never any danger to the public."

"All the material was there, but that doesn't mean it was a bomb," said Maloney.

Police used a water cannon to separate the components of the device and then used something called a water bottle charge with a small amount of explosive to render the package safe.

Even if the device was not found to be an explosive, Maloney said there's still the potential to lay public mischief charges given the disruption to the public.

At around 7 p.m., an explosion echoed through the area around the headquarters after the Ottawa Police force's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives team was called in to investigate the suspicious package.

The RCMP, who were also called in to investigate, declined comment and directed inquiries to Ottawa police. Maloney said information is being gathered by all of the relevant authorities and police are looking for witnesses.

GRAHAM LANKTREE/METRO IN OTTAWA, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Traffic disrupted

The investigation into the package closed the MacKenzie King Bridge, snarling rush-hour traffic.

- Buses on the OC Transpo transit way were backed up from the downtown core to the station at Lees Avenue, with delays of up to 40 minutes as the investigation closed the bridge in both directions.

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Jodi Arias convicted of first-degree murder in death of ex-boyfriend

Show is over, folks. Trial gained worldwide attention due to soap-opera dramatics, with at least one court regular selling spot for $200

Jodi Arias was convicted of first-degree murder Wednesday in the gruesome killing of her one-time boyfriend in Arizona after a four-month trial that captured headlines with lurid tales of sex, lies, religion and a salacious relationship that ended in a blood bath.

Arias fought back tears, and family members of the victim wept and hugged each other as the verdict was announced in the hushed, packed courtroom.

Outside, a huge crowd that had gathered on the courthouse steps screamed, whistled and cheered the news in a case that has attracted fans from across the country who travelled to Phoenix to be close to the proceedings. Some chanted "USA, USA, USA!"

The jury of eight men and four women took about 15 hours to reach its verdict after four months of testimony, including 18 days on the witness stand by the 32-year-old Arias, a small-town waitress. The jury will return to the courtroom Thursday to begin the next phase of the trial that could set the stage for her being sentenced to death.

Arias was charged with first-degree murder in the June 2008 death of Travis Alexander in his suburban Phoenix home. Authorities said she planned the attack in a jealous rage after being rejected by the victim while he pursued other women. Arias initially denied involvement then later blamed the killing on masked intruders. Two years after her arrest, she said it was self-defence.

The trial quickly snowballed into a made-for-the-tabloids drama, garnering daily coverage from cable news networks and spawning a virtual cottage industry for talk shows, legal experts and even Arias, who used her notoriety to sell artwork she made in jail.

Jurors deliberated for two full days before reaching a decision Wednesday morning.

The trial will move into a phase during which prosecutors will argue the killing was committed in an especially cruel, heinous and depraved manner, called the "aggravation" phase. If the jury agrees, another phase will determine whether she should get the death penalty.

A mob of spectators, TV crews, media trucks and reporters lined nearby streets.

Alexander suffered nearly 30 knife wounds, was shot in the forehead and had his throat slit before Arias dragged his body into his shower. He was found by friends about five days later. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this May 1 photo, Jodi Arias sits in court in Phoenix. It has become a real-life soap opera for people around the world and dozens of fanatics who camp out on a Phoenix sidewalk to get in. THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Travis Alexander MYSPACE.COM

Testimony

Arias spent 18 days on the stand describing an abusive childhood, cheating exes, dead-end jobs, a shocking sexual relationship with Alexander, and her contention that he'd grown abusive.

Better spray than sorry

South Korean soldiers spray down a firefighter dressed in protective gear to wash away mock biochemical materials used during an anti-biochemical drill as part of annual drills called Safe Korea Exercise in Seoul on Wednesday. More than 8,400 people from various government offices participated in the drill, including the Seoul Metropolitan City Police, the health ministry and military troops.

LEE JIN-MAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Appeals court upholds Berlusconi conviction

Former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's tax fraud conviction and four-year prison sentence were upheld on the first appeal Wednesday in a case that could see him barred from public office for five years.

In Italy, defendants are legally considered innocent until all appeals are exhausted, and Berlusconi's lawyers are expected to appeal the case to the nation's highest Court of Cassation.

Still, the ruling, which comes just days before prosecutors wrap up closing arguments in his sensational sex-for-hire trial, raises the question of whether Berlusconi's days as a political force are numbered.

Bunga-bunga case

On Monday, the sex-for-hire trial will resume. Berlusconi faces charges he paid for sex with an underage teen and then tried to cover it up.

Silvio Berlusconi GETTY IMAGES FILE

Although Berlusconi holds no governmental posts he remains influential. It was his decision to head the centre-right coalition that gave a boost to his forces in February's election, finishing a close second to the centre-left.

"My opinion is that a personality who had such a relevant role in Italy for 20 years — absolutely controversial, evidently, but relevant — cannot be eliminated by judicial means, but by political means," Stefano Folli, a political commentator said on La7 private TV.

The 5 Star Movement party is pressing to apply the judicial ban on public office immediately. Italian media reported that cheers went up in a party meeting when the verdict was announced.

Indeed, the case is tightly tied to Berlusconi's political fortunes. He announced he was stepping aside two days before the October lower court verdict convicting him in a scheme that involved inflating the price his media empire paid for TV rights to U.S. movies and pocketing the difference.

Even if the sentence is confirmed, it is unlikely Berlusconi would serve time for the tax-fraud case because a furlough would likely be applied.

Berlusconi has been convicted in other cases but the convictions have always either been overturned on appeal or seen the statute of limitations run out.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boycott movement

Stephen Hawking won't attend Israeli conference

British physicist Stephen Hawking — one of the world's most famous scientists — has dropped plans to attend a major international conference in Israel in June, citing his belief that he should respect a Palestinian call to boycott contacts with Israeli academics. The boycott is meant to protest Israel's treatment of Palestinians. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'Do me a solid'

Rodman to N. Korea: Free jailed American

Former NBA star Dennis Rodman is tapping his friendship with North Korea's Kim Jong Un to ask for the release of a man sentenced to 15 years of hard labour. "I'm calling on the Supreme Leader of North Korea or as I call him 'Kim,' to do me a solid and cut Kenneth Bae loose," he tweeted. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

31 arrested over Brussels Airport diamond heist

Authorities strike. In Switzerland, police have found diamonds from the robbery, while cash and luxury cars turn up in Belgium

Unlike the brilliant thieves in Ocean's Eleven, it appears that those behind the clockwork-precision, $50 million diamond heist at Brussels Airport may not get a Hollywood ending.

After three months of virtual silence on the matter, authorities struck this week, detaining at least 31 people in a three-nation sweep and recovering so many diamonds from the loot Antwerp traders lost that they are still figuring out the exact value.

Prosecution spokesperson Jean-Marc Meilleur speaks with media. YVES LOGGHE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Officials said that among the people held in Belgium, France and Switzerland on Tuesday and Wednesday are some with violent criminal pasts; the one person held in France is believed to have been one of the robbers at the airport. The evidence seized includes large sums of cash, precious stones and luxury cars.

"It was a total surprise for us," said Caroline De Wolf of the Antwerp World Diamond Center, whose traders lost millions in the Feb. 18 heist. "But we were delighted when we heard."

Six to eight people were detained in Geneva, and 24 in and around Brussels. The most important discovery was in Geneva of stones that could immediately be linked to theft. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colorado. Accused in movie theatre shooting wants to change his plea

The trial of the former graduate student charged in the deadly Colorado movie theatre shootings will likely be delayed weeks or months because he wants to change his plea to not guilty by reason of insanity.

The judge in the case will hear arguments about the request Monday. If the judge accepts the plea, James Holmes would be sent to a mental hospital where doctors would determine whether he was sane at the time. If he's found to be insane, a jury still could find him guilty.

Holmes, 25, is charged with more than 160 counts of murder and attempted murder — 12 people were killed and 70 injured in the shootings. Prosecutors have said they will seek the death penalty. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

James Holmes and his attorney Tamara Brady in March. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brazil

Pastor in Rio suburb charged with raping six women

Police in Brazil say they've detained an Evangelical pastor accused of raping six women, including three minors.

Officer Marcio Mendonca Dugubras says Marcos Pereira of the Assembly of God of the Latter Days church was detained late Tuesday in the Rio de Janeiro suburb of Sao Joao de Meriti.

He says Pereira is suspected in six rapes.

Rio's O Globo newspaper reports that one of the alleged victims said she was raped by Pereira from the age of 14 to 22.

Phone calls to the church were not answered, but it posted a statement on its website saying it is "confident in the actions of God in the life of Marcos Pereira." It adds: "The Bible teaches that there is no evangelism without persecution." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A day at the office: Eat, swim, patrol Australia's beaches

Tough assignments. Eight Canadians make shortlist for Tourism Australia's Best Jobs in the World competition

Mary Gazze of Toronto has made the shortlist in the Taste Master category of Travel Australia's Best Jobs in the World competition. FACEBOOK

Mary Gazze of Toronto is going to eat her way around Australia, if she gets the job as Taste Master. Greg Snell of Oshawa will swim with Australia's dolphins, if he gets the job as Wildlife Caretaker.

Drew Sellen of Pickering, Ont. will patrol Australia's beaches and check the water temperature if he gets the job as Park Ranger. However, he has a competitor in Margi Shah of Mississauga.

Those four GTA contestants are among eight Canadians shortlisted for Tourism Australia's Best Jobs in the World Competition. And those eight Canadians are among 150 people around the world vying for the coveted positions.

The successful job applicants will start their six-month contract positions on Aug. 1.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Job descriptions

- Chief Funster in New South Wales. Reviews festivals and events.
- Lifestyle Photographer in Melbourne. Creates city and country photo shoots.
- Outback Adventurer in the Northern Territory. Travels Outback meeting locals.
- Park Ranger in Queensland. Checks water temperatures, patrols beaches.
- Wildlife Caretaker, Southern Australia. Wakes up kangaroos, swims with dolphins.
- Taste Master in Western Australia. Eats way around state.

Floating flip-flops find fulfilment

Carver Jackson Mbatha, 40, poses next to a large toy giraffe he is making from pieces of discarded flip-flops, in front of a painted workshop wall at the Ocean Sole flip-flop recycling company in Nairobi, Kenya. The company is cleaning the East African country's beaches of used, washed-up flip-flops, and now, the dirty pieces of rubber that were once cruising the Indian Ocean's currents are being turned into colourful handmade giraffes, elephants and other toy animals. About 45 workers in Nairobi make 100 different products from the discarded flip-flops. BEN CURTIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$30-million effort

Feds create team to chase tax cheats

The Conservatives are beefing up the tools used to go after tax cheats in the hopes of recovering billions in lost revenue. A team of six to 10 bureaucrats will be assigned to work only on pinpointing tax evaders and their efforts will be backed by $30 million over the next five years for new technology and other tools required for the hunt.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 99.67¢ (+ 0.11¢)

TSX 12,585.05 (+120.94)

OIL $96.62 US (+$1)

GOLD $1,473.70 US (+$24.90)

Natural gas: $3.97 (+5¢)
Dow Jones: 15,105.12 (+48.92)

Obesity. Coca-Cola to make diet drinks more widely available around the world

Coca-Cola says it will make lower-calorie options and clear calorie labelling more widely available around the world, intensifying a push against critics who say its drinks pack on the pounds.

The Atlanta-based company, which makes Sprite, Fanta and Minute Maid, already offers diet drinks in most markets. But there's no consistency in their availability, particularly in emerging markets such as China and India.

Coca-Cola also said Wednesday that it would support programs that encourage physical activity and no longer market to kids younger than 12. That policy is already in place for the U.S., but the company did not say in which countries it currently markets to children. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Online security

Dutch gov't site under attack

The Dutch government said Wednesday its main website is being hacked, and also confirmed that a man suspected of participating in another major cyberattack on Swiss-British anti-spam watchdog group Spamhaus has been extradited from Spain to the Netherlands. The suspect, Sven Kamphuis, was arrested in Barcelona last month and extradited Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Small businesses cash in on reality-show stardom

There's no business like small business. Mix the high stakes of running a small business with a dash of family drama and throw in a camera crew and you get hit reality television shows such as Pawn Stars, Welcome to Sweetie Pie's and Duck Dynasty.

Turning small business owners into stars has become a winning formula for television producers, but some businesses featured in them are cashing in, too. Sales explode after just a few episodes air, transforming these nearly unknown small businesses into household names.

In addition to earning a salary from starring in the shows, some small business owners are benefiting financially from opening gift shops that sell souvenirs or getting involved in other ventures that spawn from their new-found fame.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rick Harrison from the Pawn Stars television series. GETTY IMAGES FILE

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A DASH OF OPTIMISM FOR PARENTS

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

I don't know any bad parents.

I just realized this recently and it came as a total shock, similar to when I suddenly grasped, in a moment of clarity, that Murdock on The A-Team is Barclay on Star Trek: The Next Generation.

I know of bad parents, sure. I hear stories about friends of friends who approached parenting the same way some people approach marriage, as a chore they felt obliged to do, like dishes.

And the media is full of stories about parents who are too strict or too lax. Parents who ride their kids for good grades, or who could ride their kids to safety if necessary because their children are so fat.

Maybe the fact that the criticisms are all over the map should have tipped me off that bad parents are the outliers, not the trend.

My brother and sister-in-law have six kids (it's a church thing), each more well behaved and well adjusted than the last. The sort of kids that cause elderly people at restaurants to warily ask, "What's the secret?" as if my brother is raising aliens, or The Stepford Children.

I'm good friends with a nine-year-old named Dash, who is perhaps the best kid I know. Besides playing hockey and tennis as well as I do, he also plays instruments including piano and the mandolin better than I do (that is to say, he plays them at all). Recently we were hanging out and I asked him if he'd seen any good movies lately.

"Life of Pi was excellent," he said.

I blinked.

"Did you read the book?"

"Not yet," he said.

Then he lit up a cigar and we discussed stock options.

I made that last sentence up, but you get my point. And I can think of at least a half dozen kids that, if not quite so erudite as Dash, seem as bright and balanced as any adults I know — probably more so.

My little slice of life is hardly a scientific sample, but I suspect all the hand-wringing over the state of parenting is similar to worry about "today's youth." People are convinced each is getting worse every generation, when things are largely the same as previous generations and in some ways better.

We like the idea that there was a Golden Age of parenting and that things would be better if we could just get back to it somehow. They never show the scene on Father Knows Best where he lashes his son with a belt for getting home late, or tells his daughters that homosexuality is an abomination before God. Or if they do, it's only on the DVD extras.

I hope to raise a child some day, though before I get to the Miracle of Life I have to get to the Miracle of Having a Steady Girlfriend. When I finally get to deal with all the anxiety and exhaustion that comes with being a dad, it'll be nice to know I'll have some role models to live up to and lean on.

And if all the great parents I'm friends with can't help, maybe Dash can. He knows best.

ZOOM

My way is the high way

HAP/QUIRKY CHINA NEWS/REX FEATURES

And you thought your commute was bad

Few journeys to school are enjoyable, but for the kids of Zhangjiawan village in south China, they are terrifying. Students must scale a 60-metre cliff using unsecured wooden ladders, or, endure the alternative, which is a five-hour hike.

The local government has now promised to build concrete steps, which should make the trip a little easier.

The village is located on a remote mountain called The Gate of Heaven in China's Hunan province. The nearest town is 35 kilometres away, and to get there, residents have to endure 90 degree cliffs, seen here. METRO

Worse than two feet of snow

"For generations, the villagers used this path to go into town to go to school. But now, some of the richer families rent an apartment in town so their child can go to school."

Resident Yang Junxiang

Heigh-ho, heigh-ho

90

The population of Zhangjiawan has quickly declined below 100 from a previous level of 400. The village had originally been created hundreds of years ago as an escape from bandits, but the appeal of isolation seems to have diminished. The village is so self-sufficient that very few outsiders need to enter. The residents are able to generate income from the natural resources that surround the mountain by growing leaves used for sticky dumplings, bee keeping and hunting.

Other scary commutes

- **Yungas Road (Bolivia).** Around 300 travellers are killed each year on this road leading from La Paz to the Amazon.
- **Lowari Pass (Pakistan).** A busy trucking route 3,000 metres up that is vulnerable to avalanches and storms.
- **Batllava Lake (Kosovo).** Kids cross an ice lake to get to school.
- **Hussaini Bridge (Pakistan).** The Hussaini village is located on both sides of the Hunza River, and to get to the other side, villagers use a bridge made from wooden planks held together by twine. Floodwaters submerged it in 2010, but it has since been rebuilt.

Click bait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

With news this week that Adobe will switch to a new, subscription-based payment plan, Photoshop users may be rethinking their Adobe allegiance. If the move has you thinking about editing your photo software service, you might want to shop around and test out some of these free photo editing sites.

Gimp

User-friendly and surprisingly full featured, Gimp is the go-to Photoshop alternative. Besides being reliable for your photo fixes, it has the added bonus of running on Linux, too.

IrfanView

Simple and user friendly, Irfan is great for light edits, photo viewing and adding simple effects.

Paint.Net

Despite the name, which sounds like a program that belongs on a Commodore 64, Paint offers advanced features without being overly complicated.

PicMonkey

If 'cute' is a prerequisite for your editing software, PicMonkey's your site. Extremely easy to use, it lets you do basic fixes and one-click touch ups (and gives you the option to upgrade for more ways to 'cuten' up your selfies).

Letters

RE: Stag And Doe? Don't Ask Me To Pay For Your Wedding, published May 7

I'm kind of guessing that you've never attended a proper Manitoba social. They're so ingrained into the culture of our province that usually one of the first questions asked of a newly engaged couple is, "When's your social?"

A big chunk of the costs for the social are usually put up by the couple themselves — the hall, the food, the booze — and they're the front runners on organizing social prizes and donations. What gets charged for beverages is nowhere near what you'd have to be paying at a bar. The only way you'd get cheaper booze is buying it yourself and drinking it in your backyard. Socials are also a great way to celebrate with people that you may not be inviting to your wedding. Some co-workers, acquaintances, family friends — people that you're friendly with but you don't know well enough to invite to the ceremony and reception.

Socials are crazy fun. You heckle the couple when they're pulling tickets for the prizes. You buy them drinks. Everyone (who's left) bounces around like a fool at the end of the night to Spirit of the West's Home for a Rest.

Amanda posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: londonletters@metronews.ca

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SCENE 2

Buzz around sweet harmonies

EP release. Blackwood Honeybees hit the spot with a darker, alternative sound that mixes Bluegrass beats, intense lyrics and masterful flow

BACKSTAGE PASS
Mila Petkovic
london@metronews.ca

Sisters Dawn Redskye, left, and Shawna Redskye, members of the Blackwood Honeybees, are releasing their new EP May 15 at The Black Shire Pub. MELISSA PARROTT

The sweet dark sound of the Blackwood Honeybees is something a bit different than the indie rock you might be used to hearing.

The dark alt-country band from London has just recorded a self-titled EP set for release on May 15 at The Black Shire Pub.

They will also be playing Toronto's legendary Horseshoe Tavern on May 13.

The Honeybees' driving bluegrass beat is full of melancholy undertones, and offset by very intense harmonies, or as the band refers to them, "blood harmonies."

They flow from the talented mouths of sisters, Dawn and Shawna Redskye.

"We grew up singing together. We had a very musical house — listening to lots of different music all the time," says lead singer and banjo player Dawn, 25.

Shawna, 23, plays the guitar and fiddle.

The sisters were born to an Aboriginal father and Irish mother on Bearskin Lake First Nation reserve near Hudson Bay.

"I remember being taken care of by my kokum — that means grandmother in Ojibwe. It was a pretty isolated community," says Dawn.

The sisters aren't able to visit the reserve because it's too remote to be reached by affordable transportation.

"We both kind of struggle with an identity crisis, having two very different sides and not being able to fully connect with either," says Dawn.

"There's a sadness and a loneliness that comes across in our music."

One of songs on the new EP is called Small Town.

"We lived north of London in a very small, white, religious town, and we weren't religious at all. The song is about wanting to leave and pursue bigger things," says Dawn, who lived in Forest with her sister until they moved to London four years ago.

Deal With the Devil is another song on the EP.

"It's a fun song and a homage to Tom Waits, one of my inspirations. It goes back to old Americana music, with religious themes and struggling with internal demons," says Dawn, who also draws inspiration from the band 16 Horsepower and the native folk artist Buffy Sainte-Marie.

The Blackwood Honeybees have been working almost non-stop recording and playing shows for the past few months.

Other band members include Jeff Kahl on drums and Mike Ge on double bass.

Their EP release show will feature guests Billy Christopher (London) and Defne (Oshawa). The doors open at 8 p.m. and cover is $5.

Around town

Other events you should know about

- **Tunes.** The ambient, electronic pop project You'll Never Get to Heaven (London), Saltland (Montreal) and Wormwood (London) will play the APK (347 Clarence St.) on Friday. Doors open at 9 p.m. Tickets are $5.
- **More tunes.** Raleigh (on tour from Calgary) and Graham Nicholas are playing The London Music Club (470 Colborne St.) on Thursday. The show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are $8.

Iggy's bubble just refuses to Pop

Ready To Die. Determined, durable rocker's new album with The Stooges proves age is no obstacle to all involved

When Iggy & the Stooges broke up in 1974, almost no one who'd heard of the band had actually heard it.

More than 40 years later, Iggy Pop's band has a new album, Ready to Die, a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and growing reverence for its place in music history. It's one of rock's stranger success stories, but what do you expect when it comes to Iggy Pop and the proto-punk band everybody used to hate, but really loved?

"It's true. It's a funny arc with us," Pop said in a phone interview last week. "That is the way it is, actually, in all the various numerical yardsticks of all this crud — it's bigger than it was. We have the advantage that it was so tiny when we started. It was really, really tiny in numerical scope, but it's grown and all those old records still sell really nice and steadily, and they're heavily licensed. People get to hear them at sports events and on movies and in adverts."

When historians and critics sort through the band's legacy, Pop notes, they always point out the Stooges' initial commercial failure: "But I always felt I was never making them for a quick buck. I was always making them forever."

The Michigan-based Stooges broke up in 1974 after dropping a pair of influential albums, Fun House and Raw Power. The group with Mike Watt on bass reformed in 2003 and guitarist James Williamson rejoined the band in 2009 after guitarist-bassist Ron Asheton passed away. The 66-year-old Pop spoke about getting better with age and the possibility of more Stooges to come.

What do you think accounts for the band's continuing growth in popularity?
It got more to the general public maybe somewhere in the mid-'90s. It just got to be everybody was ready to go, "Oooh, OK." I think part of that is there were fewer and fewer people doing sort of quote-unquote rock 'n' roll. It's become less and less available on a daily basis.

Your guitarist James Williamson returned to the band after a long break from music. Did he struggle to get back up to speed?
There are little nuances that I hear of things that he can do that he couldn't do a year ago or two years ago. That's interesting. Ultimately in a group of this vintage, there are certain things that you can't do quite as much of that you could do when you're in your 20s. If you've got soul and know how to marshal your intelligence, you can more than make up for that by the depth you can bring and the intelligent decisions you can make as a musician when you're in your 60s and I'd say that's kind of what he does.

The experts say your ability to pick things up slows down as you age. Do you agree?
No, that's a lot of cold s—. In fact, playing an instrument really well is almost a detriment to playing music if you want to play it for your own pleasure or play it as an author, as originator. ... If you read

Iggy Pop and Michigan outfit The Stooges just keep going and are now on their rock victory lap. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bound for Glory by Woody Guthrie, the first chapter it starts out he's hoboing on a train, and he's using his guitar to shelter him from the rain, he's getting into fights with it. It doesn't even have a guitar case. And everybody knows Woody Guthrie couldn't play but three chords. I guarantee you, you could start in your 50s and learn how to play guitar like Woody Guthrie really quickly. He pulled music out of his box. That's what it's about really, pulling music out of your box.

You had a reputation for high-energy shows during the first go-round with the Stooges. Is it more difficult to perform to that standard now?
My personal ability to project physical energy probably didn't peak until only about six years ago, seven years ago. It was in my mid to late 50s and that's because when I was younger I didn't work at it at all.

Do you think there will be more Stooges music down the road?
You know, that's a good question. By the time I got done with this one, I been in the mood like, "Oh, f—, am I glad that's over with. Let's get this thing out." But that's also the tension of a modern marketing plan. They start rattling my cage and hassling me like two months before the thing comes out. ... So right now I think there's a very good chance we could.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hip Hop may be in need of a serious checkup

Healthy change. The early live-fast, die-young image of the genre is waning as its stars of old smarten up and speak out

The culture that in the 1990s lost its brightest stars to gun violence has in recent years seen a series of notable rappers die of drug and health-related causes. Since 2011, hip-pop pioneer Heavy D, singer and rap chorus specialist Nate Dogg and New York rapper Tim Dog all died of ailments in their 40s. Kriss Kross rapper Chris Kelly was found dead last week in Atlanta of a suspected drug overdose at 34.

Some of the genre's elder statesmen say they're worried about the culture's focus on youth, current emphasis on freewheeling partying and "you only live once" ethos, as popularized by Drake's hit The Motto.

"Hip-hop being a lifestyle culture ... a part of American culture, you have to be mindful that somebody is going to grow old, age," said rap pioneer Melle Mel. "At some point somebody has to realize that hip-hop has to learn how to grow up. It's way too juvenile and it's been that way for too long."

The 51-year-old rapper, who memorably warned in 1982's The Message about urban youth who "lived so fast and died so young," said he suffers chronic bronchitis from being around marijuana and cigarette smoke when he was performing. Of course, heavy drug use in hip-hop or rock is hardly new: Cowboy of his Furious Five group died in 1989 "basically from getting high," Melle Mel said.

"It's not really worth it to literally party yourself to death. It's like committing suicide," he added. "You have to choose between what makes you feel good and what makes you think you feel good."

Other influential rappers who've died in their 30s in the last decade include Southern rap pioneer Pimp C and Wu-Tang Clan's Ol Dirty Bastard, both from drug overdoses.

Lifestyle isn't to blame for all fatal health problems in hip-hop. Smooth-voiced Midwesterner MC Breed died of kidney failure in 2008 at age 37. Soulful producer J Dilla died in 2006 at age 32 of complications from lupus. Cancer killed rappers Guru in 2010 at 48 and Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys last year at 47. One of the genre's top stars, Lil Wayne, has inadvertently focused attention on the issue. After he was hospitalized for multiple seizures, the 30-year-old rapper told a Los Angeles radio station in March that he's an epileptic.

Though he's still a heavy marijuana smoker, Snoop Dogg said he stopped drinking alcohol at clubs six years ago after suspecting that a woman put the sedative Rohypnol — widely known as a "date-rape drug" — in one of his drinks.

"I used to drink alcohol as a fashion statement. If you in the club, they bringing you bottles and you're just drinking. I don't do that anymore. I drink water or cranberry juice," he said. "I'm not cheap. I just want to survive." Snoop, 41, said his focus on health comes from his desire to remain competitive and relevant to a genre that's largely focused on youth.

"Because when we perform, we don't have as much energy," he said. "So now we've got to get up and work out, do push-ups or jumping jacks, or whatever we've got to do to keep ourselves looking good and feeling good. Because one thing about an old man — he don't ever want to feel like he old."

For producer and rapper RZA, hip-hop's emphasis on youth stems from an urban culture that since the '80s has had trouble planning for the future.

"They said we should be dead or in jail by the age of 25. And I think we live like that," the 43-year-old Wu-Tang Clan founder said. "But what happens when you make it past 25? What happens when you make it to 40? Are you prepared for life now?"

"Think of the great artists like Biggie Smalls and Tupac, who made some of the greatest hip-hop music of all time. But they didn't make it past 25," he said. "They didn't even become a man. ODB was just becoming a man. What I want to tell the hip-hop generation out there is that there's a chance you're going to become a man. Be prepared." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Death by hip hop

"It's not really worth it to literally party yourself to death. It's like committing suicide."
Rapper Melle Mel

Chris Kelly of Kris Kross died recently of a suspected drug overdose.
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Humble Edgerton embraces his inner cad

The Great Gatsby. Director Baz Luhrmann gave actor used to good-guy parts the confidence to take on bad-boy Buchanan role

MATTHEW PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York

Australian Joel Edgerton, left, plays the racist, selfish philanderer Tom Buchanan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joel Edgerton is in his underwear. His schedule is so packed he has to do one of his interviews while being fitted for a tuxedo, which he will wear to the Cannes screening of his new film, Baz Luhrmann's pricey 3D version of The Great Gatsby.

"One day he's going to see me without my pants on in a movie, if he hasn't already," Edgerton cracks. So while the Aussie actor — best known for his roles in Animal Kingdom, Warrior, and Zero Dark Thirty — is in various states of undress, we get to talking about his performance as Tom Buchanan, the most hissable richie of F. Scott Fitzgerald's tome.

You just saw the movie last night. What was that experience like?

It's hard to tell whether you like a movie when you see it for the first time, just because you're in it. You're judging your own performance most of the time. Or I do, anyway. Like, "Oh f—, he used that piece instead of the other piece." Or I think I did something too big or too small. It's all negative. It was great for a movie like Animal Kingdom, because once my character is killed (very early in the movie), then I could just enjoy the rest of the film. Like, "Thank God I was shot." My brother was in Zero Dark Thirty as well. We both came out with the same experience, saying, "That movie was awesome until we arrived."

Baz Luhrmann has a strong visual style. How is he with actors?

Baz makes you feel valued in the process. If he wanted to change anything on a given day, he'd go to each of our trailers for one-on-one meetings. Few other directors would do that. I'm sure it wasted a bit of time in the morning. Actors love working with him, and they told me Baz will make you look great. He'll make sure you come off well visually.

When you were first pitched a version of Gatsby with 3D and Baz's time warp style, what were your thoughts?

I didn't imagine words popping out of the screen and the rapid editing style. But I've seen his other movies. I didn't know why I expected anything more subdued. But so many things are being made in 3D, and the idea of a drama in 3D is really cool. And Baz is constantly drawing from the themes of tragic love, so for both his visual style and his thematic leanings, he's the perfect guy to make this story.

You play a lot of nice guys. What was it like playing a cad like Tom?

I never thought I could be Tom Buchanan. When I was younger I thought I could do anything. I thought I could play a girl. Young actors are pretty stubborn about casting. Then when I got behind the camera to make our own movies and we went through casting processes, I realized not everyone can do what we needed. And I chilled on the idea of people who wouldn't cast me in certain roles. Baz put the fire back under me. I shouldn't have been Tom Buchanan. I'm not that guy. But his excitement in seeing that side of me got me to do it.

How do you play a character who's so often indefensible?

Tom is a pig. He's very arrogant and racist and selfish and misogynist and a philanderer. He's kind of honest about it as well. Tom was one of the first football players at Yale, and Yale football players were the first sports heroes for American kids. Everyone would have known about him. Now he's retired, he's got all the money in the world. I just imagined Tom was really bored, and unhappy. And then when Gatsby comes in and tries to take his wife away, it brings the sport back into his life. He may not love Daisy, and he'd rather just go around and have affairs. But if another man comes in to take your possessions, he's gonna fight. He's not used to losing.

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The Great Gatsby not so great, critics say. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

‘Overwrought, asinine, exaggerated and boring’: Ouch!

The reviews are trickling in for one of the most buzzed about movies of the year and they are far from “Great.” Alas, it doesn’t seem like reviewers are keen on Baz Luhrmann’s The Great Gatsby, which opens this Friday.

One said it’s as “boring as sitting through 8th period English” and another went as far as calling it “overwrought, asinine, exaggerated and boring ... about as romantic as a pet rock.”

Even The New Yorker didn’t let it down easy, saying that Luhrmann is “less a filmmaker than a music video director with endless resources and a stunning absence of taste.”

Who cares? It’s in 3D, has a soundtrack produced by Jay-Z and it looks like glitter threw up all over it! Give it to me now!

Madonna’s still got it

Madonna will be honoured as 2012’s top touring artist at the Billboard Music Awards. The 54-year-old’s MDNA tour roped in $305 million at her 88 sold-out shows, with 2.2 million people attending.

Prince, Taylor Swift and Lil Wayne are set to perform at the May 19th ceremony with Nicki Minaj, Bruno Mars, Miguel, Justin Bieber, Pitbull, Christina Aguilera, Selena Gomez, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Chris Brown, Ed Sheeran, Akon, Ne-Yo, and David Guetta in attendance.

So, yeah, $305 million. We can cut out all of the “old” jokes we throw her way.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Britney back with bitching bod (again)

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

It looks like Britney Spears is heading to Las Vegas for a residency this fall, a la Celine Dion. And she talked to Shape about how she’s gearing up for it.

“I’m doing 90 minutes of yoga twice a week in addition to a lot of cardio — hour-long sessions three times a week with my trainer, Tony Martinez,” she tells Shape. “The [Vegas] performances won’t be simple — they’ll be a massive party from start to finish. And to pull this off, I have to be in top condition and running at full speed.” (Translation: No more Cheetos.)

She also is apparently paid by Nutrisystem to shill their diet system in interviews. She tells Shape that she’s on the program (that’s the shake for breakfast and lunch and a “sensible” dinner for those of you keeping track at home).

I think what is remarkable about this cover isn’t her toned body — or the amazing Photoshop job from the art director — but that she still rocks a belly button ring. And a very glittery one at that. What is this, 1996?

Rihanna gets cheers and jeers on tour.

Rihanna booed in Boston, cheered on in Brooklyn

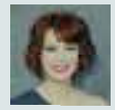
Rihanna was booed for turning up late at a concert in Boston, but the audience in New York cheered her on even though she didn’t start on time the following night.

Boston.com reported that fans at the TD Garden on Monday booed the singer for starting her concert at 10:30 p.m. instead of her scheduled 9 p.m., and without opening act A$AP Rocky. Doors had opened at 7:30 p.m.

A representative for Rihanna didn’t respond to an email about the singer’s lateness.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twitter



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LIFE 3

The most stylish movies of all time

Not since Carrie Bradshaw hauled her collection of Manolos onto the big screen has a film's wardrobe received as much hype as Daisy Buchanan's Prada-designed dresses and Jay Gatsby's Brooks Brothers suits have. So as The Great Gatsby finally hits theatres, we're revisiting our favourite fashion movies of all time — because the runways might give birth to the trends, but it's the movies that determine which ones will become iconic.

SARA CARLSSON
Metro World News

Grey Gardens

Grey Gardens is not so much a documentary about two recluses related to Jackie O as a 100-minute trend machine. Little Edie's head scarves, Big Edie's sorbet coloured house coats, the long furs, the wacky layering, the wild print-mixing: it's all in style right now. And these women — not Anna Wintour — created the look.

La Dolce Vita

The godmother of fashion cinema, Federico Fellini claimed that his inspiration for the film came from a Balenciaga dress.

Sex and the City

Inarguably the biggest of fashion films, it was as influential as the TV show, reinforcing our love of Manolo Blahnik and turning Vivienne Westwood into the new Vera Wang.

Rear Window

It's hard to overstate Alfred Hitchcock's influence on fashion. Alexander McQueen once famously built a collection around his movies. And you see hints of Grace Kelly's Edith Head-designed costumes in the earlier seasons of Mad Men. In Rear Window, Grace Kelly only wears five outfits, each one memorable and relentlessly copied.

Funny Face

"Take the picture!" Hubert de Givenchy and Audrey Hepburn sealed their relationship as one of the movie world's greatest duos with a single scene: Audrey running down a staircase in the Louvre, her red sash floating above her, mimicking Winged Victory. Givenchy created costumes for four of Hepburn's movies, all of which we were tempted to put on this list.

Mahogany

"I'm a winner baby!" This movie was an opportunity for Diana Ross to be her fabulous self, in one fabulous outfit after another. Our favourite is the suitably glitzy Cleopatra look above.

Bonnie and Clyde

Faye Dunaway's mid-length skirt suits, knit tops, berets and silk scarves are iconic, making this the second most referenced movie in fashion history.

Breakfast at Tiffany's

Coco Chanel is credited with creating the Little Black Dress, but Audrey Hepburn popularized it. The satin Givenchy sheath she wore as Holly Golightly was undisputedly the most famous LBD of all time.

The Royal Tenenbaums

Wes Anderson has a clear and unique style that reveals itself in everything, from his choice in typeface to his set design. The wardrobe is just an extension of this and yet it takes on a life of its own. Think Steve Zissou's red beanie or, more memorably, Margo Tenenbaum's Grey Gardens-y fur.

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• Register online as a participant or donor at www.runforovariancancer.ca

Go beyond just kicking the tires

Purchase process. You can never do too much when hunting for your perfect vehicle

JIL MCINTOSH
Wheels/Drive

When comparing vehicles, check to make sure they really are similar. On some entry-level vehicles, the base price might not include air conditioning. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Despite how much they cost, vehicles are often impulse purchases. Many people visit showrooms just to kick tires, but fall for something they see. That can sometimes work out, but it's a better plan to research and find exactly the right car for your needs.

Ask friends and family for recommendations, including what they don't like about their vehicles. Don't think something is too minor to consider — that badly placed cupholder could be an issue on every commute.

The Internet is a great resource for car shopping. Manufacturers' websites (make sure you are on the Canadian versions) will contain specifications about each vehicle, along with photos, lists of standard features and options, and pricing.

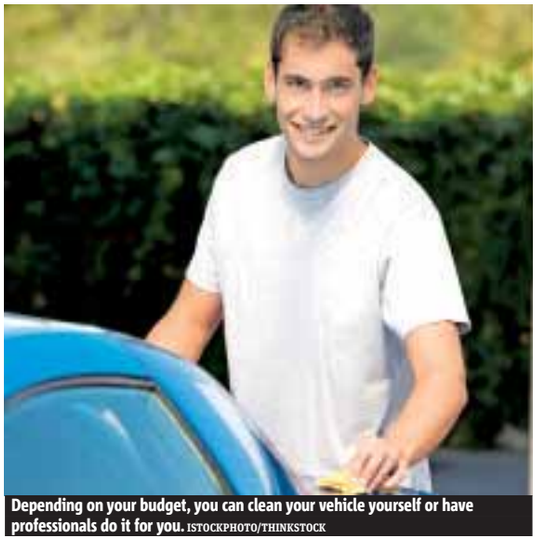
When comparing vehicles, check to make sure they really are similar. On some entry-level vehicles, the base price might not include air conditioning. If it can be added, it might make the car more expensive than a competitor with standard air conditioning.

Reviews can help narrow your list of cars to test drive. Some are launches, where writers drive new vehicles for a few hours for initial impressions. Temper these with regular reviews, where the writer drives it daily for a week or more for a more rounded assessment.

Now that you have a few models in mind, it's time to test drive. Surprisingly, many people take a car out for just a quick trip around the block. You are going to be living with this vehicle for many years, so spend at least an hour or more, including time on the highway.

The car should drive smoothly on city streets and have enough passing power on the highway. Try parking it a few times to see how easily it manoeuvres. Make sure you are comfortable and that you can reach everything. Something that bugs you on the test drive won't get better with time.

Research other factors, too. Check with your insurance company to see what you are going to pay for coverage. If you are tempted by flashy 19- or 20-inch wheels, find out what replacement tires cost. And if it comes down to choosing between models from different companies, how convenient is the dealership to home or work when you need servicing?



Depending on your budget, you can clean your vehicle yourself or have professionals do it for you. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Car care. Protect your investment

HENRY STANCU
Wheels/Drive

That new car look lasts about as long as the next mud puddle or major coffee spill, and then it's all downhill as the wear and tear of daily use takes its toll on your new set of wheels.

However, there is a wide array of products and services geared to keeping your cherished buggy sparkling long after it has left the dealership.

Depending on your budget, you can do it yourself or have professionals do it for you.

The question you need to ask yourself is: Do you want to protect your investment and ensure its good resale value down the road?

"Nothing lasts forever," says Lawrence Bailey, owner of New Image Car Spa, an auto detailing shop that has been in business in the Yonge and Eglinton area for 19 years. "But if you have a good car and you keep it in nice shape, it will look better longer and, when the time comes to sell, it will be worth more."

Inside and out detailing packages range from $125 to $375 at New Image, which recommends getting the work done every six months.

For most people, the cost of professional detailing and paint protection is too high.

This is where the do-it-yourselfers thrive, buying hundreds of car cleaning products for everything from the dashboard to wheel rims.

Experts say your new car should be washed once a week if it's parked outside and once a month if kept in a garage. A lot also depends on how often it's driven and exposed to the elements, ranging from nature to road salt.

It's always wise to wash and wax you car in the shade because if it's too hot, the detergent will quickly dry in spots causing stains and the wax will bake on the surface. Use soap specifically designed for auto surfaces, rather than household cleaners, which may damage the finish.

Whether you use a garden hose or rinse with water from a bucket, it is always wise to do so gently, applying as little pressure as possible. And always start from the top of the vehicle, so the dirty water flows downward.

Before starting on the exterior it's a good idea to clean the interior first, because you don't want the inner dirt to mar the shiny clean exterior.

Vacuum the rugs, seats and all the nooks and crannies, and shake or wash the floor mats outside the car.

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Available at participating dealers. Certain restrictions apply. See dealer for details. ^Turbo upgrade credit for 2013 Optima EX Turbo models (OP74XD/OP74YD) is $2,800 and is applicable to finance of a new 2013 Optima EX with a Turbo engine (OP74XD/OP74YD) only and is deducted from the negotiated selling price before taxes. $2,800 Turbo upgrade credit consists of $1,800 + $500 loan savings + $500 Clearout Bonus. Certain restrictions may apply. See dealer for details. ^Model shown Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price for 2013 Optima SX Turbo AT (OP748D)/2013 Rio4 SX with Navigation AT (RO749D)/2013 Soul 2.0L 4u Luxury AT (SO759D)/2013 Optima Hybrid Premium (OP748D) is $35,550/$23,450/$27,345/$37,550 and includes delivery and destination fees of $1,455/$1,455/$1,650/$1,455, environmental fee, variable dealer administration fees (up to $399) and A/C charge ($100, where applicable). Licence, insurance, applicable taxes, tire recycling and filter charges of $34, OMVIC fee and registration fees are extra. Retailer may sell for less. See dealer for full details. Available at participating dealers. * Highway/city fuel consumption is based on the 2013 Rio 1.6L GDI 4-cyl (M/T)/2013 Optima 2.4L GDI 4-cyl (A/T)/2013 Soul 2.0L MPI 4-cyl (M/T). These updated estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the *EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide*. Your actual fuel consumption will vary based on driving habits and other factors. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of printing. For more information on our 5-year warranty coverage, visit kia.ca or call us at 1-877-542-2886. Kia is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.

Tasty things come in mini packages

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

Miniature Hoisin Garlic Burgers

This recipe serves five. Two mini burgers are 264 calories and contain 7 grams of fat. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

These burgers are extremely moist and flavourful due to the hoisin sauce.

Instead of beef, use ground chicken, veal or pork, or try a combination. Serve these on miniature hamburger buns and add some sautéed onions.

If you prefer, make four or five regular burgers instead of the minis.

Ingredients

- 1 lb extra-lean ground beef
- 1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 3 tbsp chopped cilantro or parsley
- 4 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tsp minced fresh garlic
- 1 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tsp sesame oil

1. Heat the barbecue to high and spray with cooking oil, or preheat the oven to 450 F.

2. Combine the beef, bread crumbs, green onion, cilantro or parsley, 2 tablespoons of the hoisin sauce, garlic, ginger and egg in a bowl. Mix thoroughly and form into 10 mini burgers.

3. Whisk the water, remaining 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce and sesame oil together in a small bowl.

4. Brush half of the sauce over the burgers.

5. Barbecue, or place on a rack on a baking sheet and bake for 10 to 15 minutes (until no longer pink in the center). Turn the patties once, halfway through, and brush with the remaining sauce. Serve on mini hamburger buns, if desired, and garnish with sautéed onions.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY: ROSE REISMAN

For your phone

Kitchen Disasters & Fixes (iPhone/iPad/ Android; $2.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

Thinking of cooking for mom? This collection of fixes, rescues and cover-ups will keep your intentions edible. Learn to save burned rice, reclaim overcooked vegetables and more.

Making salty soup edible

Can salty soup be saved? The answer is yes. How easily? That depends. Start with the easiest, quickest fix and advance to more time-consuming methods if needed.

Starter. Prosciutto-Wrapped Pineapple

1. Prepare grill for direct cooking over high heat (450 to 550 F).

2. In blender combine paste ingredients. Process until a chunky paste forms, scraping down the sides of the bowl at least once.

3. Coat each pineapple spear with about 1 teaspoon of the paste, and then wrap each spear with two prosciutto slices. Grill the spears over direct high heat, with the lid closed, until the prosciutto is crisp on all sides, 8 to 10 minutes, turning occasionally. Serve. NEWS CANADA/ 2013 WEBER-STEPHEN PRODUCTS LLC. RECIPE FROM WEBER'S NEW REAL GRILLING BY JAMIE PURVIANCE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

Ingredients

Paste

- 1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions (white and light green parts)
- 1 jalapeño chili pepper, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 tbsp peeled, minced fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp packed dark brown sugar
- 1/2 each tsp dried thyme, ground allspice, ground cinnamon, kosher salt
- 1 large pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into 16 spears, each about 1 by 5 inches
- 32 thin slices prosciutto, about 1 lb total

Mother's Day is this Sunday. Celebrate your appreciation for your mother with some of the gifts below. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Transform mom's relaxation time

JANINE FALCON
For Metro

Scented candles, soothing bath salts and silky body oils and butters to transform mom's precious relaxation time.

Cire Trudon Candle: Clean-burning, cotton-wick, vegetal wax masterpieces from a company that dates back to 17th-century Paris. $99 at teatroverde.com.

Philosophy Living Grace Satin Finish Body Oil: A silky, fine-mist spray that leaves skin sublimely soft and subtly scented with neroli, lily of the valley and musk. $33 at sephora.ca.

Bath & Body Works Beautiful Day: Sunny, uplifting fruity-floral shower gel, body cream, body mist and eau de toilette. From $11 at Bath & Body Works.

Bliss Blood Orange + White Pepper: Light, tangy scrub, body wash and luscious body butter to pamper skin thoroughly. From $21 at the Bay and sephora.ca.

Barr-Co Fine Handmade Bath Salts: Skin-softening mineral salts, milk powder and soothing colloidal oatmeal with apothecary-style charm. $36 at Anthropologie.

Aquiesse Candle: Natural wax and a clean-burning wick housed in a beautiful ribbed tin with a secret matchbook compartment lid that doubles as a pedestal. $39.95 at teatroverde.com.

L'Occitane En Provence Pivoine Shimmering Body Oil: A delicately perfumed shimmering oil with peony extract and grapeseed to nourish face and body. $36 at L'Occitane boutiques and loccitane.ca.

Weleda Indulgent Body Lotions Kit: All-natural biodynamic formulas and pick-me-up scents in travel-size citrus, sea buckthorn, wild rose and pomegranate. $16 at weleda.ca, well.ca and Whole Foods.

Josie Maran Argan Infinity Creamy Oil: Deliciously scented with a hint of citrus, a multi-purpose melting-texture balm for face, hands and flyaways, too. $34 at Sephora and sephora.ca.

Crabtree & Evelyn La Source Gel Booties: Sole-satisfying, softening multiple-use sockettes to encourage Mom to put up her feet. $28 at Crabtree & Evelyn.

Clockwise, from above, Bliss Blood Orange + White Pepper, from $21 at the Bay and sephora.ca, Aquiesse Candle, $39.95 at teatroverde.com, L'Occitane En Provence Pivoine Shimmering Body Oil, $36 at L'Occitane boutiques and loccitane.ca, Barr-Co Fine Handmade Bath Salts, $36 at Anthropologie, Bath & Body Works Beautiful Day, from $11 at Bath & Body Works, Crabtree & Evelyn La Source Gel Booties, $28 at Crabtree & Evelyn.

Sterling silver charms from $30

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Art deco style all the rage

Earlier this year I predicted that the style of art deco would make a resurgence in home decorating. The look of art deco was invented in the early part of the 20th century, and incorporated modern lines, masculinity and luxurious finishes like polished dark wood, brushed gold metal tones and hits of black for opulence. As both traditional and modern, the look of deco helps to bridge something old with its clean, modern lines. This month The Great Gatsby movie is being released; a show stopper filmed in the art deco period with incredible fashions and home decor. I though it would be suitable to feature a few home decor items that will help get the deco look in your own home.

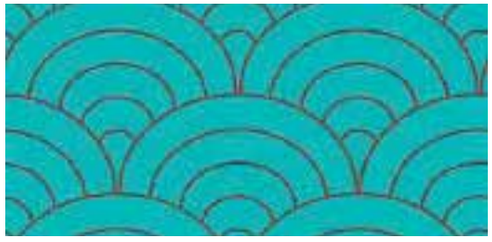
DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Memoirs Lavatory Faucet

Graphic and masculine taps add strong design lines to a lavatory. Want a truly authentic deco bathroom? Try adding a black toilet and sink to the room. $630, kohler.ca

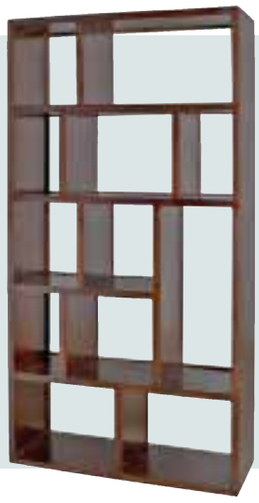
Shand Kydd Peacock Modern Spiral Wallpaper

Simple gold fans on turquoise adds a deco feel to the walls. Perfect for adding drama to a small foyer entrance or on the back wall behind a bed. $76/double roll, sears.ca



Biblioteca Bookcase

The dark walnut stained shelving makes this bookcase a great display piece or bookshelf. It fits into any space and is a personal design favourite as a see-through room divider. $700, urbanbarn.com



Starburst Mirror

Gold and shine reflect the opulent lifestyles of the decor period. Hang one in the dining room and forgo the fancy chandelier. $250, crateandbarrel.com

Stockholm Flatwoven wool carpet

Bring this season's biggest colour combo of grey and black to the floor; layer an animal hide rug on top for a completely glamourous look. Stockholm Flatwoven wool carpet, $350, ikea.ca

Ells Swivel Chair

The quintessential curved arm club chair is all deco in black leather; and this one swivels, making it perfect for reading or watching your favourite movie. $2,000, elte.com

21909 COOKS RD
MOUNT BRYDGES, ON N0L 1W0
This home has incredible character offering a large livingroom with gorgeous stone wood burning fireplace. The yard is just under 2 acres - for the 'horse lover' it offers 5 box stalls, 2 standing stalls, run-in stall, natural pond that feeds the barn along with separate well and fenced in runs!! The property also offers a small workshop, separate pool house, fenced inground pool.

637 REGENT
MOUNT BRYDGES, ON N0L 1W0
This fully updated home offers incredible value. New windows, furnace, central air, eaves, trim, bathrooms, new kitchen w/ backsplash, new electrical panel, new oak treads and the list goes on. Pleasant surprise is the large loft. The basement is a workshop high and dry - waterproofed, new windows, spray foamed w/R20 insulation and new chimney insert to vent 'owned' water heater. Massive decking w/gazebo, on-ground swimming pool w/new pump, liner and pool shed!

339 BEATTIE
STRATHROY, ON N7G 2X5
Main floor is approx 1,500sqft bringing in $870/mth + utilities... w/wood burning fireplace, hardwood, large eat-in kitchen, 3bdrms, livingroom, lower rec room and laundry room. Rear basement apartment is approx 500sqft bringing in $600/mth. This home has a large, private, treed lot with a new roof, siding, furnace, air conditioning. Excellent investment as a landlord or to live in one unit while collecting revenue!! Minimum of 24hrs notice.

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Are you buying first or selling first?

COSTA POULOPOULOS
Ontario Real Estate Association Board

Many of my clients ask me if they should sell their home before buying another, or wait until they find the perfect new place.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer; it comes down to what your needs are and how tight the market is.

While selling your home first alleviates the financial burden of carrying two homes, this is not always possible. I usually recommend playing it safe by putting conditions into offers. Sellers can include a condition that the sale will only go forward if a new home is found within a given time frame.

A conditional offer can also protect buyers. In the event that a buyer does not sell their current home, they aren't obligated to buy the home they have an offer on.

Here are some of the pros and cons of selling versus buying first.

If selling first

- You'll know how much money you have to spend on your new home and be able to make firm offers on homes that you are serious about buying.
- You may have to rent or make other arrangements until you find your next home — in many short-term situations, the new homeowners will allow you to rent back your old home, provided you cover their costs.
- Understand the rules around the portability of your mortgage. This option lets you transfer the interest rate and existing terms of your current mortgage to your new home (subject to a credit review and property appraisal).

If buying first

- You may have to finance both homes, carrying extra debt until you sell your current one.
- You may be pressured to sell your current home at a reduced price in order to align the closing dates.
- You'll only have to move once and can avoid putting furniture in storage.
- Especially if the market is "hot" then this may be the only way to ensure that you are able to compete with multiple offers and get the home that you want.

Be sure to speak to your realtor when choosing your strategy. Your realtor will help you negotiate comfortable closing dates, get you a good price on your home, sell it quickly and help you understand your finances.

More information is available online at howrealtorshelp.ca.

Make a list of pros and cons. Are you ready to sell your current home before making an offer? ISTOCK IMAGES

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THINKSTOCK

SAVE MONEY WITH SPRING TEMPERATURES

Lowering your thermostat can lower your heating bill. Many people find setting the thermostat at 22°C (72°F) is comfortable and some will find 20°C (68°F) just fine. When you're away during the day, try lowering it more to save energy.

For optimum comfort and convenience, a programmable thermostat can be used for many types of heating and cooling equipment to automatically turn up the heat before you get up each morning or return from work. These thermostats automatically lower and raise the temperature at preset times during the day and week. However, programmable thermostats only save energy if they are used. So become familiar with how to set your thermostat to get the most cost savings from it.

The extent to which you can safely set back your thermostat depends on the number of people in your apartment, how much moisture you produce from bathing, showering, laundry and cooking, your use of bathroom fans and the kitchen range hood to control moisture, and the window and wall insulation values. Making good use of your bathroom fans and range hood helps to prevent condensation and maximize how far you can set back the thermostat.

One note of caution before you turn down the heat. As you reduce the temperature in your apartment, you may find more condensation (the appearance of water) on your windows. Prolonged condensation can lead to water pooling on windowsills and forming in concealed spaces within the exterior walls or roof spaces — particularly if you close drapes and blinds at night. This, in turn, can damage surfaces, finishes, carpets, draperies and lead to mold growth.

If you set back your thermostat, closely monitor your windows and other exterior wall surfaces for condensation. Ensure that mold does not develop by wiping up water as it forms and increasing your setback temperature setting to warmer levels.

If you have a gas- or oil-fired hot water tank in your apartment, adjust the temperature to deliver hot water at each faucet that is between 46°C (115°F) and 49°C (120°F).

Electric hot water tanks should not be set below 60°C (140°F). However, thermostatic mixing valves are recommended to ensure water temperature delivered to faucets, tubs and showers does not exceed 49°C (120°F) as scalding can result.

Add an insulated cover over the hot water tank to keep the water warm. You can do this yourself if you have an electric tank. A qualified contractor should handle gas- and oil-fired tanks.

If your hot water is provided by a central system and it's hotter than 49°C (120°F), ask your building manager if the temperature can be safely reduced.

If you have a hot water tank in your apartment, turn the water heater down or off when you plan to be away for more than a few days. There's no need to reheat the same water over and over again if it is not going to be used. When you return, the water heater will heat the water in the tank in a few hours.

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NHL playoffs

Pens coach gives Vokoun Game 5 green light

Pittsburgh Penguins coach Dan Bylsma insists he still believes in Marc-Andre Fleury, and that the issues for the reeling Penguins go far beyond the struggles of their Stanley Cup-winning goaltender.

Still, that didn't stop Bylsma from making a switch he hopes will shift momentum in Pittsburgh's highly entertaining but slightly bewildering first-round playoff series with the New York Islanders.

Tomas Vokoun will get the start in net for the Penguins in Game 5 on Thursday, a move necessitated by three straight shaky performances by Fleury and Vokoun's eye-popping numbers against the Islanders this season.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL playoffs

Leafs fan sucker punched in Boston gets free tickets

The Maple Leafs have reached out to the Toronto fan who says he was assaulted after watching his team win in Boston.

The Leafs gave Kyle Hay two tickets for Game 4 in Toronto on Wednesday night.

The 23-year-old from nearby Oshawa said he was knocked out when he was sucker-punched by a Bruins fan in the wake of Toronto's 4-2 win at TD Garden on Saturday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

For the results of the Leafs game go to metronews.ca

Senators head coach Paul MacLean and goalie Craig Anderson share a laugh during practice in Ottawa on Wednesday. The Senators lead their playoff series against the Canadiens 3-1. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sens need to prove they can close it out

NHL playoffs.
Ottawa coach eager to avoid déjà vu with comfortable series lead

Veteran

"Whenever you have a team on the ropes you've got to be able to put them down and that's our mindset."

Senators forward Chris Neil on finishing off the Canadiens in a series they lead 3-1 and avoiding a repeat of last year's complacency in a loss to the Rangers.

The Ottawa Senators are on the brink of advancing in the NHL playoffs, but according to coach Paul MacLean they are "scared to death."

The Senators have a 3-1 lead over the rival Canadiens heading into Game 5 Thursday in Montreal. MacLean has done his best to deflect attention from his players during the emotional series and Wednesday afternoon was no different as he spoke to the media.

As the Senators prepare to clinch the best-of-seven Eastern Conference quarter-final, MacLean is doing his best to make his team appear as the underdog.

"We're scared to death," said MacLean of Game 5. "I know I am. We know it's going to be really hard. Tomorrow is going to be a hard game and we have to make sure we're ready for that no matter what they have or who they play. It's going to be hard."

Last year the Senators had a 3-2 series lead over the New York Rangers, but went on to lose the next two games. They're hopeful they've learned from that experience.

"We're going to find out tomorrow if we learned any lessons," MacLean said. "We can talk about it, speak about it and address it, but it's actually done on the ice when the puck drops. That's when we'll find out for sure."

The Senators have a perfect 7-0 record when leading a series 3-1, but the last time the team won three straight playoff games was 2007, and only four players — Daniel Alfredsson, Chris Phillips, Jason Spezza and Chris Neil — remain from that squad.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canucks' Stanley Cup window closing

Sharks centre Patrick Marleau scores the game-winning goal past Canucks goalie Cory Schneider during Game 4 of their first-round playoff series in San Jose, Calif., Tuesday. MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vancouver Canucks management went into silence mode Wednesday in the aftermath of the club's first-round playoff exit at the hands of the San Jose Sharks.

But major changes loom after the Canucks, who came within a game of winning the Stanley Cup in 2010-11, bowed out early for the second consecutive spring.

The Canucks announced early in the afternoon they will hold a media availability Thursday. In the morning, the team's recorded phone message said it could be "a few days" before one was held in wake of Tuesday's 3-2 overtime loss in San Jose, which gave the Sharks a 4-0 sweep of their best-of-seven series Western Conference quarter-final series.

Time to retool?

"It's frustrating.... This seems like a lost year."

Canucks goalie Cory Schneider

Management is trying to figure out what went wrong in the playoffs for a team that viewed itself as a strong Stanley Cup contender but fell well short of its target.

General manager Mike Gillis decided not to make any major moves following last year's five-game loss to the Los Angeles Kings. Gillis thought the club was close to returning to the Stanley Cup final, but the humiliating sweep by the Sharks likely means that bold moves are inevitable. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Happ feeling effects of having bell rung

MLB. Jays place pitcher on 15-day DL after getting hit in the head with a comebacker

Blue Jays pitcher J.A. Happ is carted off the field on a stretcher on Tuesday in St. Petersburg, Fla. MIKE CARLSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

J.A. Happ says he experienced an "immediate, loud ringing" in his ear when he was hit in the head by a line drive Tuesday night.

The Toronto Blue Jays left-hander was released from hospital earlier Wednesday after being hit on the left side of his head by a ball off the bat of Desmond Jennings during Tuesday's game against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Speaking to reporters at Tropicana Field, Happ says he remembers releasing the ball but not seeing it coming back at him.

In addition to the ringing in his ears, Happ says he also felt intense pressure.

Happ sustained a head bruise and cut to his the left ear.

He says he moved out of the way slightly, which likely prevented a more serious injury.

"I got some stitches and there's a fracture in my skull ... behind my ear," he said. "But it's not serious or threatening."

Happ said he also tweaked his knee when he fell. Doctors will see him Wednesday night to determine the severity of that injury.

He was placed on the 15-day disabled list rather than the seven-day concussion DL.

The frightening incident left players on both teams shaken and revived questions about whether Major League Baseball is doing enough to protect pitchers, who often find themselves in harm's way on the mound.

The pitcher raised his glove in front of his face as quickly as he could, a futile attempt to shield himself from the batted ball headed straight for his temple.

It was too late. Thwack!

The sickening sound of a sharply hit baseball striking his skull was heard all the way up in the press box.

And then, sheer silence.

Happ, hit squarely in the second inning during Toronto's 6-4 victory, was immobilized on a backboard, lifted onto a stretcher and wheeled off the field. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Doc given good news, bad news

For Roy Halladay, arthroscopic surgery on his troublesome throwing shoulder became the best-case scenario when he had prepared himself for the worst — a career-ending injury that would force his retirement when he's far from ready.

Halladay will undergo a procedure in his right shoulder to repair a partially torn rotator cuff and remove a bone spur. He also has some fraying of the labrum.

"I think we did all the right things," Halladay said. "Now I feel I have something to grasp onto, something to move forward with. I don't feel as lost as before. I feel like there's some answers."

On the 15-day disabled list since Monday because of inflammation in his throwing shoulder, Halladay said he expects to have surgery next week to give himself the best chance of returning this season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Soccer

Ferguson to retire at season's end

During more than a quarter of a century in charge of Manchester United, Alex Ferguson has always found the way to win — and win again.

Scrappy, abrasive and always up for a fight, Ferguson turned the club into a global power and established himself as the most successful manager in British football history.

And now, the 71-year-old Scotsman is going out on a high. On his own terms.

With his 13th Premier League title already secured, Ferguson announced Wednesday that he is retiring at the end of the season.

"The decision to retire is one that I have thought a great deal about and one that I have not taken lightly," the Scotsman said. "It is the right time."

Ferguson's trophy collection also includes two Champions League titles, five FA Cups and four League Cups. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

5 TAILS, ONE STORY

Canada Post and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) have teamed up on the Choose Pet Adoption stamp issue. Meet the stars of the stamps above. Use them on your mail to help raise awareness about pet adoption as the first choice when bringing a new animal into a family!

CFHS FSCAA

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CANADA POSTES POST CANADA

NBA. Karl named coach of the year

George Karl led the Denver Nuggets to a team-record 57 wins without a big name on his roster.

For that endeavour, Karl earned the NBA's coach of the year on Wednesday.

He received 62 first-place votes, followed by Erik Spoelstra of the Miami Heat with 24 votes from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters. New York's Mike Woodson finished third and San Antonio's Gregg Popovich, who won the award last season, was fourth.

The Nuggets went 57-25 — the league's fourth-best record — and captured the No. 3 seed. But the Nuggets were eliminated by the Golden State Warriors 92-88 in Game 6 last Thursday night.

"I am honoured and energized to represent coaching and be their ambassador as coach of the year and continue to symbolize the great coaching there is in the NBA," Karl said in a statement. "There are probably seven or eight guys who are deserving of it and another 10 or 15 other coaches who have done a great job and aren't getting any recognition." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

George Karl GETTY IMAGES FILE

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
The only obstacles you will face today are ones you create for yourself — so don't create any. Whatever you are doing, just take your time. What's the rush? Slow down and smell the flowers along the way.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You know what you want, you know how to get it and no force on Earth is going to stop you. With that kind of determination you are sure to accomplish some remarkable things over the next few days.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Why can't you just accept that people are different and see things in different ways? The message of the stars today is that your time and energy are precious — don't waste them.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Someone seems to believe that you are weak and that you would rather give in than fight for your rights. It is essential that you set the record straight. Stand up to their bullying ways.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
There could be an emotional scene today, but you cannot allow your feelings to overpower common sense. Someone has got to think logically and it looks like that someone is you.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You can spend your life worrying about things that may never happen. Or you can push your doubts to one side and devote your time and energy to having a good time.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Cosmic activity in the wealth area of your chart means you would be wise to resist any urge to spend money for the sake of it. Aim to end the week with more cash in your pocket than when you started.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Tomorrow's eclipse in Taurus, your opposite sign, marks the halfway point of your solar year. It's a good time to look back at the past six months. What have you accomplished? Where can you improve?

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You need to face facts, both in your personal life and at work. Something you once had high hopes for is not working out the way you intended and you must change it or forget it.

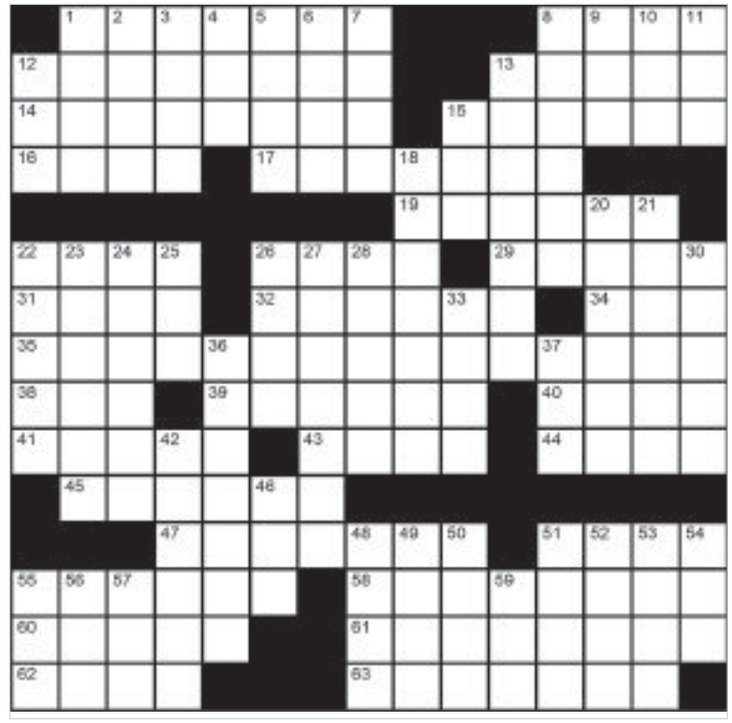
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may not want to push yourself to the front but from the look of your solar chart, you have little choice in the matter. Someone needs to take the lead and few people are more qualified than you.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Someone is stirring up trouble just to see how you will react. You can resist the urge to rise to the bait or you can pretend to be really annoyed and give them hell. It could be lively.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Every now and then the pressure builds up to such an extent that you need to find ways to let off steam. The trick is to do so in constructive ways. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

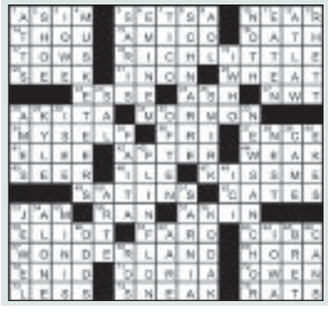
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. May 9th to 12th, 1885: Battle of __ (North-West Rebellion conflict, fought in Saskatchewan)
8. Shipshape
12. Retro photo
13. Scorch
14. Anne Murray hit
15. 1985 Ron Howard directed flick
16. 'Clement' completers (Juicy fruits)
17. Stephen __ (Canadian author of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town)
19. TV weatherman Al's surnamesakes
22. Hertz rival
26. "Old man look __ __ life..." - Neil Young
29. Make really happy
31. __ __ put into other words...
32. Scram: 2 wds.
34. Fido's doc
35. Yuk Yuk's performer: 2 wds.
38. Seafood, to some
39. Season the fries again
40. Wing ___ prayer
41. "Survivor" team
43. Cartoon fight sound effects
44. Actress Susan, and others
45. Deli selection
47. Imitate
51. Single-named supermodel
55. Attired, Caesar-style
58. Los Angeles, colloquially: 3 wds.
60. Swashbuckler's prop
61. Andrea Martin character, Edith __
62. Gambit
63. Chosen, in sports: 3 wds.

Down
1. German city
2. Hand cream ingredient
3. Some marbles
4. Globe
5. Spiral shape
6. "Spenser: For __" ('80s series)
7. Norse epic
8. Sudbury stuff
9. Antacid brand
10. "It's _ __." (Greenlight giver's comment)
11. Perfect rating, spelled-out
12. Series Dan Aykroyd hosted, "__ Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal"
13. __ salmon
15. Pigeon's patter
18. Farley Mowat book, Never __ __
20. Valley
21. Unwavering
22. Plus
23. Politician pickers
24. Roma's realm
25. "__ of the Mask"
26. Flu symptom
27. Gardener's purchase
28. Robert Mitchum/Jane Russell movie of 1952
30. Belonging to Sicily's volcano
33. Li'l quantities
36. Imagined
37. Common sitcom role
42. __-eyed
46. Spa mask ingredient
48. Purina rival
49. Mountain lake
50. Charles Lamb's pen name
51. Ms. Sommer
52. __ fide (In bad faith)
53. Memory: Prefix
54. 'Com' completer (Funny flick)
55. Tea party utens.
56. Bird of Minerva
57. Doubled word with Dolls (Rock band)
59. Play part

Yesterday's Crossword



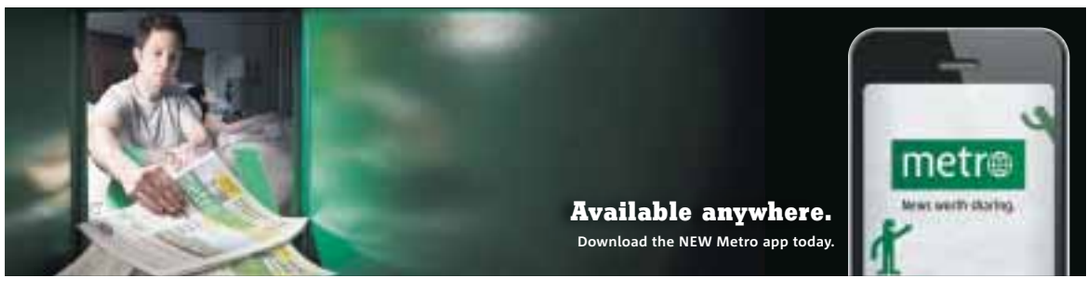
Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

			8		4			
	6						1	
2	3	5				6	4	8
		7	9		6	8		
1								5
		6	4		5	1		
7	8	4				2	3	1
	5						9	
			7		2			

Yesterday's Sudoku

3	6	2	7	5	8	9	1	4
4	9	8	3	2	1	5	6	7
1	5	7	4	9	6	3	8	2
7	8	3	6	1	9	2	4	5
6	2	4	5	8	7	1	9	3
9	1	5	2	3	4	6	7	8
2	7	9	8	6	3	4	5	1
5	4	6	1	7	2	8	3	9
8	3	1	9	4	5	7	2	6



GIVING KIDS A SPORTING CHANCE IN LONDON

When the kids in the six-week Canadian Tire Jumpstart ski/snowboard instruction program at Boler Mountain in London first see the hill they'll be tackling, they're overwhelmed with excitement and nervousness.

"They can't imagine going down it," says supervisor/instructor Tom Redekop, "but we have them on the bunny hill the first day."

Open to 20 to 25 youth between the ages of 13 and 16, the program includes bus transportation for the Monday-night one-hour group lessons, dinner, rental equipment and lift tickets.

At the end of the six weeks, the teenagers are transformed. "Their confidence level is through the roof," says Redekop. "It's wonderful to see them learning as a team and cheering each other on."

One participant named Jamie had this to say: "Skiing was really fun, I met new people and I was excited at how well I did to get on the bigger hills."

Anna May is the Manager of Boler Mountain customer service who helps administer the program with Jessika Gunton. "We're committed to this program, and Jumpstart has been a great partner," says May.

Jim Dodson is the Associate Dealer of London's "Wonderland" Canadian Tire. "Our store has been supporting Jumpstart since the beginning through the Boys and Girls Club," he says. "We've helped thousands of kids realize their sporting dreams."

JUMPSTART DAY EVENTS

Saturday, May 25, is Jumpstart Day. Many Canadian Tire Retail stores across Canada are planning fun activities to help raise money for their local community, such as charity barbeques, GoClean waterless car washes, and other fun games. Visit your local Canadian Tire store on May 25 to help kids in your local community "get in the game."

To learn more about Jumpstart Day events, visit www.jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/en/events

help change it all.
anadian Tire, Sport Chek, Mark's
ed ball in exchange for a $2 donation.
a or call 1-877-616-6600
lp all kids play

IN 2012, MORE THAN
$4,555,146
WAS INVESTED IN ONTARIO
TO GIVE KIDS A
SPORTING CHANCE

Jumpstart

CANADIAN TIRE JUMPSTART HELPS KIDS REALIZE THEIR SPORTING DREAMS

What kid doesn't love to swim, dance or play soccer, basketball, baseball or hockey? Not only are those activities fun, but research also shows that physical activity and access to sports for children leads to increased self esteem, strong leadership skills and improved school performance.

The reality is that one in three Canadian families can't afford to enrol their sons and daughters in sport and recreational programs. That's where Canadian Tire Jumpstart comes in. The national charitable program is making a real difference in the lives of young kids from age four to 18, and its annual May Red Ball Campaign contributes to those efforts. The campaign's slogan, "Together we can help all kids play," couldn't be more apt.

In return for a $2 donation at any Canadian Tire Retail, Sport Chek, Atmosphere, Mark's or Canadian Tire Gas+ store, customers will receive a mini red volleyball or soccer ball throughout May. One hundred per cent of donations go directly to help deserving kids in each store's community participate in organized sport and recreation.

Since Canadian Tire Jumpstart launched in 2005, it has helped more than 570,000 (and counting) kids take part in 73 different activities. "Our vision is more than getting children involved in sports and recreation—it's to have a country where all kids have a chance to fulfill their dreams," says Johnny Misley, the President of Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities.

Jumpstart is unique in its ability to work in every community across Canada, with 332 local chapters built on the support from volunteers. These chapters work closely with more than 2,600 community partners to identify families with financial needs whose children would benefit from the programs. Jumpstart Ambassador and Olympic gold medalist Rosie MacLennan explains, "there are so many benefits to participating in sports, from gaining social skills to building great friendships. All kids should have this opportunity, which is why I believe in the power of Jumpstart."

This year Jumpstart is proud to welcome Sport Chek and Atmosphere stores, to the family. Since these two banners came on board in January, they have raised more than $550,000 alone. Also, again this year we have support from a partner beyond the enterprise family Pita Pit who will also be offering Jumpstart red balls in exchange for a $2 donation.

"We're giving children the chance to learn life skills, create lasting friendships and fulfill their dreams," says Misley. "That's the power of sport."

For more information, visit jumpstart.canadiantire.ca or call 1-877-616-6600.

A little red ball can

Donate $2 today. Visit your local C
or Atmosphere store to receive a Jumpstart r
Visit jumpstart.canadiantire.c

100% of your donation stays in YOUR community

Together we can he

LONDON metro®

Together we can help all kids play

1 in 3 Canadian families can't afford to enrol their kids in organized sport and recreation. You can help change that.
Visit jumpstart.canadiantire.ca or call 1-877-616-6600

Jumpstart